works have been undertaken in 440 Mini Water Sheds in 2000 villages of 340 blocks. These schemes would help in maintaining potable water supply in the areas by recharging ground water storage.

(c) to (e) The Government of Madhya Pradesh had submitted a proposal in 1994 for providing financial assistance for the Project prepared by them for ground water recharge in six districts namely Rajnandgaon, Dhar, Mandla, Karhal (Morena) Shajapur and Rajgarh at an estimated cost of Rs. 3257.39 Lakhs. In addition, a scheme on Bolana Percolation Tank in Khandwa district for construction of percolation tank and gully plugs at an estimated cost of Rs. 10.97 lakhs was also received in December, 1996. Some of the projects of the State Government were proposed to be included in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme prepared by the Central Ground Water Board for assisting the states in ground water recharge. However, the Centrally Sponsored Scheme has been dropped as the same has not been approved by the Planning Commission.

NH No. 8

1837. SHRI TARACHAND BHAGORA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to convert National Highway No. 8 from Ajmer-Biawar-Udaipur-Ratanpur-Ahmedabad into four lane;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Out of total length of 515 km. of Ahmedabad section of N.H. No. 8, 6 km. length i.e. km. 509 to 515 near Ahmedabad is four lane. For four laning of entire N.H. No. 8, National Highways Authority of India is conducting feasibility study.

(c) Does not arise.

Periyar Dam

1838. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken by the Union Government to increase the level of storage capacity in Periyar Dam to cater to the needs of farmers in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether Kerala is not conceding the demand to increase the water storage level to 156 ft. as compared to the present water level of 100 ft.; and

(c) whether the Government propose to intervene in the matter to help the farmers of Tamil Nadu and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) With ageing of the dam, safety of the Mulla Periyar Dam was considered doubtful. On the request of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the dam was inspected by officers of the Central Water Commission. It was advised that all the shutters of Spillway may be kept in raised position to lower the Water Level in the reservoir from FRL 152 ft to 136 ft and also recommended strengthening of the dam specifying the measures to be taken. The Government of Tamil Nadu has completed most of the strengthening measures.

(b) The Government of Kerala has apprehensions on the safety of the dam even after strengthening measures and is not agreeing to restore the FRL to 152 ft.

(c) It is a matter between the Governments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and they should settle the matter amicably. The Central Government is also trying for an amicable settlement.

Changes in International Flights

1839. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the tourism industry has suffered heavy losses due to sudden changes in international flights recently in view of the convenience of the Haj pilgrims;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for not making any alternative arrangements for foreign tourists in such a situation?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Alternate arrangements were made for 1570 passengers ex-Frankfurt and 745 passengers ex-Paris by routing them over Air India's flights ex-Rome/London. Besides, 708 passengers from Osaka were transferred to other carriers.

Completion of Paradip Port

1840. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the completion of Paradip Port update project for expansion of mechanical coal handling facilities is anticipated to be delayed considerably;

(b) if so, when the project is likely to be completed according to the revised schedule as against the original target;

(c) the reasons therefor;

(d) the extent to which the cost of the project is likely to escalate as a result thereof; and